United Nations A/61/PV.3

General Assembly

Sixty-first session

Official Records

3rd plenary meeting
Thursday, 14 September 2006, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Ms. Al-Khalifa ..... (Bahrain)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development

Agenda item 55

Globalization and interdependence

(b) International migration and development

Report of the Secretary-General (A/60/871)

Note by the President of the General Assembly (A/61/187)

The President: The General Assembly, pursuant to resolution 60/227 of 23 December 2005, will hold, today and tomorrow, the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development.

As members are aware, the High-level Dialogue will discuss the overall theme of the multidimensional aspects of international migration and development in order to identify appropriate ways and means to maximize its development benefits and minimize its negative impact.

(*spoke in Arabic*)

I am delighted to welcome you all to this historic event. This High-level Dialogue underlines the very clear linkage between migration and development and the various opportunities and challenges regarding this issue. It will also serve as a platform for moving forward, mobilizing political will and building effective partnerships to ensure that the potential contribution of migrants to the development of their countries of origin and destination will be realized and that their rights will be safeguarded.

Last month, I read an extremely disturbing article about the ordeals that migrants suffer on their way to the country of destination. Many travel in open wooden boats with no shelter except a plastic tarpaulin stretched over one part. They are packed like sardines, without room to stretch out, and their basic needs go unmet. One can only imagine what they endure as a result of the salt water, infected wounds and disease, risking their lives for a new beginning. Thousands of migrant knowingly or unknowingly take on all of those dangers, determined to lead a new life.

Migration is inherent to human nature. It has become a major aspect of modern societies in the face of globalization. The revolutions that we have been witness to in the area of communications, transportation and the rights of individuals to stay abroad have done a great deal to facilitate the movement of people across borders. They need a lot of courage to make this move to seek better lives and overcome such hardships. In 2005, 191 million individuals courageously sought just this, and that number is likely to rise in the coming years.

If harnessed constructively, migration can have a profound effect on development. The financial and human capital of migrants, especially through

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remittances, can reduce poverty substantially by increasing access to education and health care, thus filtering directly into the Millennium Development Goals. On the other hand, migration of skilled persons from developing countries to developed countries can severely impede development.

Naturally, this extremely complex relationship raises numerous questions, and consequently it is vital to have an open, constructive and active dialogue so that we can eliminate misconceptions, understand each other's perspectives, identify our common concerns and examine new ideas and joint activities that could strengthen migration policies and protect the rights of migrants. This requires close cooperation between Member States, international institutions, non-governmental organizations and the private sector. Then and only then will we be able to address the question of how to ensure that labour supply matches labour demand for today and in the future, and prevent smugglers from doing the matching for us. Then and only then will we be able to address the question of how to ensure a smooth internal transition for countries that have gradually shifted from being primarily sources of migrants to destinations for migrants. Then and only then will we be able to address the question of how to protect migrants' rights and ensure that migrant women's rights are not violations.

This is the very first high-level event held by the United Nations entirely devoted to this topic. Many events have been organized by the General Assembly over the course of the year in preparation for this High-level Dialogue, including the panel discussions on international migration and development, held in New York and Geneva last June and July, respectively; the informal interactive hearings with non-governmental organizations, civil society and the private sector, held in New York last July; and an international symposium on the subject in Turin, also last June.

The four round-table discussions to be held this afternoon and tomorrow will give Member States a unique opportunity to exchange views among themselves and with civil society, the private sector and international institutions on various topics related to migration and development.

In terms of migration management, Member States could work with interested parties to enhance coherence in policymaking and foster dialogue between countries of origin and countries of destination.

In terms of international migration law and human rights, I believe that Member States can work with all interested parties to increase awareness and strengthen existing international legal instruments that protect migrants. It is also essential to promote integration, combat gender-based discrimination, and provide capacity-building to countries that need technical assistance.

In terms of migration development, Member States can work with interested parties to mainstream migration into the Millennium Development Goals, emphasizing the important economic role of migrant communities and the development potential of remittances. Furthermore, Member States may work with interested parties to develop a more effective global labour market, improve the security of remittance transfers, and analyse the role of circular migration.

We note that the link between migration and development is not a new one. What is new, however, is the speed of global mobility. That is why a reduction of barriers on goods, capital and services all across the globe directly affects the movement of people. This reality cannot be ignored; no development strategy, no global strategy, no foreign policy strategy should move forward without integrating migration considerations.

The United Nations has a crucial role to play in realizing the potential of international migration as an underpinning of economic growth and development. Through this dialogue, the United Nations will seek ways of building effective partnerships so that coordinated action can be taken to develop the capacities needed in the field of migration.

Clearly, these two days will not be enough. This will be the beginning of our efforts to conduct more research, help improve policy programme responses, dispel myths and misperceptions about international migration, provide long- term perspectives on key issues and anticipate new trends. The Secretary-General's report on international migration and development provides us with a number of recommendations, including the idea of creating a global forum on migration and development. These proposals, as well as Member States' contributions, will inspire us in our deliberations on this important matter.

Indeed, it is imperative that we continue our exchanges and arrive at a more constructive understanding of migration and of its benefits.

(*spoke in English*)

I give the floor to the Secretary-General.

The Secretary-General: Migration is a courageous expression of an individual's will to overcome adversity and live a better life. Over the past decade, globalization has led to an increase in the number of people with the desire and capacity to move to other places. This new era of mobility has created opportunities for societies throughout the world, as well as new challenges. It has also underscored the strong linkages between international migration and development.

Just a few years ago, many people did not think it possible to discuss migration at the United Nations. Governments, they said, would not dare to bring into the international arena a topic on which their citizens are so sensitive. Yet here you are, and I sense that the mood is changing.

More and more people are excited about the ways in which migrants can help transform their adopted and their native countries. More and more people understand that Governments can cooperate to create triple wins — wins for migrants, wins for their countries of origin, and wins for the societies that receive them.

No one can deny that international migration has negative aspects — trafficking, smuggling, social discontent — or that it often arises from poverty or political strife. But by being here today you show yourselves willing to tackle migration's challenges through dialogue and cooperation, rather than through antagonism and isolation. Your presence is also a tribute to the infectious energy and visionary pragmatism of my Special Representative, Peter Sutherland. Peter, please stand up and be recognized. I am deeply grateful, Peter, for your efforts, which have reassured and inspired everyone.

As you begin your dialogue, let me suggest three reasons why this is the right moment for it. First, to put it simply, we are all in this together. More countries are now significantly involved in, and affected by, international migration than at any other time in history. And they are no longer so easily divided into "countries of origin" and "countries of destination". Many are now both. Countries that are very different in other respects face surprisingly similar migration challenges.

Secondly, the evidence on migration's potential benefits is mounting. With their remittances reaching an estimated $167 billion last year, the amount of money that migrants from the developing world send back to their families exceeds the total of all international aid combined. And money is far from being the whole story. Migrants also use their skills and know-how to transfer technology, capital, and institutional knowledge. They inspire new ways of thinking about social and political issues. They form a dynamic human link between cultures, economies and societies. As a result, we are better positioned than ever to confront the challenges of migration and seize its opportunities.

Thirdly, Governments are now beginning to see international migration through the prism of opportunity, rather than that of fear. You are focused on magnifying the positive, mutually beneficial aspects of migration, on sharing your experiences, developing practical ideas and building partnerships.

For all these reasons, and also because people migrate not only between neighbouring countries or within regions, but also from almost every corner of the world to the other, international migration today cries out for a global discussion, and it is wonderful that you are all here today.

Of course, it also stirs passionate debate. We cannot get away from that. It does stir passionate debate. It can deprive countries of their best and brightest. It can divide families. It can generate social tensions. Sometimes criminals and terrorists exploit it. But the answers to many of these problems can be found through constructive engagement and debate.

That is why I think the dialogue you are starting today should not end today or tomorrow. I am especially delighted that so many of you have embraced my proposal for a Global Forum on Migration and Development and asked me to help set it up. I am particularly grateful to the Government of Belgium for offering to hold its first meeting next year. I believe such a forum can foster practical, evidence-based cooperation among Governments. It can give you a chance to frame the issues in a way that allows you to move forward together, to discover areas where you agree and to find ways of improving cooperation.

Clearly, there is no consensus on making international migration the subject of formal, norm-setting negotiations. There is little appetite for any norm-setting intergovernmental commission on migration. But, as I understand the thinking of the countries that back it, the Forum would be the opposite of that. It would be informal, voluntary and consultative. Above all, it would not make binding decisions.

The Forum would allow us to build relationships of trust and to bring together the best ideas that different countries have developed: facilitating remittances; engaging diasporas; exploring new ways to reduce poverty; building educational partnerships; and so on. Finally, it would show that Governments are now willing to address this complicated, volatile issue in a thoughtful, constructive fashion.

The Forum must be led and overseen by States, but the United Nations system, and I, personally, stand ready to support it. I have decided to extend the mandate of my Special Representative on Migration beyond this dialogue. I trust that the Special Representative will form an essential link between the proposed Forum and the entire United Nations system. Also, I stand ready to create a voluntary Trust Fund to help support the Forum's work, should you find that useful.

The United Nations is rising to the challenges of international migration in other ways as well. Last spring, I established the Global Migration Group, which brings together United Nations offices, funds, programmes, and agencies engaged in aspects of international migration and development, as well as the International Organization on Migration. You are no doubt familiar with the important work done by the constituent members of the Group — from supporting labour migration to helping developing countries connect better with migrant communities abroad, from outstanding demographic analysis to research on remittances, from efforts to secure the rights of migrants to combating trafficking in human beings. The Global Migration Group is working to ensure stronger coordination and greater coherence among its members.

This High-level Dialogue will succeed to the extent that it ushers in an era of sustained, thoughtful consideration of international migration and development issues. For far too long, migration policy has been based on hunches, anecdotes and political expediency. It is now time to turn to the evidence and use it to build a common understanding of how international migration can bring benefits to all.

The President: I now give the floor to the President of the Economic and Social Council, His Excellency Mr. Ali Hachani.

Mr. Hachani (Tunisia) (President of the Economic and Social Council) (*spoke in French*): Finally we are meeting together today in the General Assembly to discuss, in a spirit of cooperation, one of the most sensitive items, but also one of the most urgent items, on the agenda of the international community — international migration and development. Indeed, the international community is seriously addressing this question, and the High-level Dialogue must provide appropriate responses.

I myself had the pleasure of presiding over one of the discussions that led up to this High-level Dialogue. I also participated in the United Nations Symposium on International Migration and Development held in Turin, during which the governmental authorities had a chance to have fruitful interaction with experts on questions of international migration and development.

These meetings, as well as other international gatherings including the informal interactive discussions held in the General Assembly with representatives of non-governmental organizations and civil society and private sector organizations, have highlighted the many opportunities that international migration can offer receiving societies, countries of origin and the migrants themselves. But they also create challenges that must be urgently faced. This Dialogue is therefore of crucial importance; the outcome of our deliberations will guide our future actions to manage migration and ensure that the positive effects prevail.

It is not my intention here to provide an exhaustive list of questions that I am sure will be discussed during this Dialogue, but I should like to stress a number of points. The first is that international migration, accompanied by targeted policies, can benefit development, both in countries of origin and in receiving countries.

Furthermore, Governments and the international community can do a lot to strengthen the positive impact of migration on development and to minimize

its negative consequences. There are many political options that can help to ensure that migration further benefits all parties concerned: sending remittances can be facilitated and transfer fees reduced; return migration can be promoted, particularly for those who have acquired expertise and have amassed savings abroad; and the access to financial institutions of migrants and their families can be expanded.

These measures are particularly important today, since we are seeing an expansion in programmes to meet the growing demand for labour in the receiving countries. Such programmes may produce a synergy that benefits migrants, countries of origin and receiving countries. At the same time it should be stressed that temporary migration programmes cannot resolve all the problems that migration has to face; it is essential that the formulation of these programmes be based on respect for the rights of migrants.

With regard to the migration of highly qualified people, it is important to stress that these migrants may acquire expertise and experience abroad, or supplement their existing skills to enrich the human capital of their countries of origin when they return. Even if these migrants stay in the host country, they can provide valuable resources for their countries of origin as investors or as possessors of new knowledge. However, their contributions may be seriously jeopardized if they are forced to take jobs that do not match their skills. For some countries, and in particular in essential sectors, such as health care and education, the migration of qualified people may impede development. Clearly, in a world marked by great mobility of qualified workers, the accumulation of human capital must be acknowledged as an international challenge and no longer as an exclusively national challenge. Hence, international cooperation is, without doubt, necessary to deal with this.

Cooperation is also essential in order to effectively combat the illicit trafficking in persons and to prevent the most vulnerable people, particularly women and children, from falling victim to this crime. We all have a responsibility to combat and prevent trafficking in and exploitation of persons. As the report of the Secretary-General indicates, international migration can be beneficial only if the rights of migrants are respected, and if host countries support the mutual adaptation of migrants and of receiving countries.

It is important to stress that many political measures to avoid or reduce the negative impact of migration cannot be successful without true cooperation among the Governments concerned. And even when such cooperation is not essential, the sharing of lessons learned from this experience and the exchange of information both take on a particular importance. In other words, the opening up of dialogue and consultation at the international level can contribute a great deal to the better management of migration. Accordingly, the recommendation of the Secretary-General to create a global consultative process on international migration and development, where Member States can exchange information, identify best practices and establish partnerships, deserves our attention.

The Economic and Social Council has contributed to the preparatory work of this High-level Dialogue through its functional commissions: the Commission on the Status of Women, the Commission for Social Development and, in particular, the Commission on Population and Development. The summaries of the Chairperson of the Commission for Social Development on "International migration and migrants from a social perspective" and of the Chairperson of the Commission on the Status of Women on "The gender dimensions of international migration", as well as the report of the Commission on Population and Development (E/2006/25), which contains a major resolution on international migration and development, were all transmitted by the Economic and Social Council to the General Assembly as background documents for this High-level Dialogue.

I very much hope that this Dialogue will help formulate new perspectives on the question of how to strengthen the positive effects of international migration. The Economic and Social Council would be able to draw on them in exercising its function of coordinating policies, as well as in exercising the new functions entrusted to it by the 2005 world summit, through annual ministerial-level reviews to monitor progress in implementing the internationally agreed development goals, and through the Development Cooperation Forum with regard to the ongoing dialogue on development cooperation.

I am convinced that the outcome of the Assembly's deliberations will play a crucial role in the achievements of the international community, and that follow-up of this High-level Dialogue will make it possible to establish a better framework for the management of international migration and

development. I therefore wish the Assembly every success in its discussions.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I call upon the representative from Algeria on a point of order.

Mr. Messahel (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): I am sorry to have asked for the floor at this stage in our work. I will later have an opportunity, Madam President, to congratulate you on your election and to congratulate the Secretary-General for having taken the initiative of convening this meeting.

I wish to ask the Secretariat for a clarification. As members know, at its most recent summit, in Banjul, the African Union adopted a Common African Position on migration, as well as a plan of action. These are two major African Union documents that highlight for the first time a common African vision about this issue and about the phenomenon of migration. It is my understanding that those two documents have been transmitted to the Secretariat. We would like these documents to be distributed as contributions to this Dialogue. If it has already been done, that is good news; if not, I would request that it be done. I believe that the African Common Position is of great interest. It will give added value to our work, for a continent that is affected by this phenomenon to an extraordinary degree. At the same time, we want to be a stakeholder in finding a comprehensive solution to this problem.

The President (*spoke in French*): I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat to give a response.

Mr. Chen (Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management): On the issue raised by the representative of Algeria, we in the Secretariat will look into the matter immediately. I can assure him that we will take immediate, prompt measures in response to his request — if measures have not already been taken.

The President: In resolution 60/227 of 23 December 2005, the General Assembly decided on the following organizational matters for the High-level Dialogue. The two-day Dialogue will consist of four plenary meetings and four interactive round tables.

The Chairperson of round table 1 is Her Excellency Ms. Tarja Filatov, Minister of Labour of Finland. The Chairman of round table 2 is His Excellency Mr. Francisco Lainez Rivas, Minister for Foreign Affairs of El Salvador. The Chairman of round table 3 is His Excellency Mr. Kastriot Sulka, Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Equal Opportunities of Albania. The Chairman of round table 4 is His Excellency Mr. Jean-François Ndongou, Minister Delegate to the Ministry of State and to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation, Francophonie and Regional Integration of Gabon. Members are invited to consult the *Journal* for logistical details.

The summaries of the deliberations of the four round-table sessions will be presented orally by the Chairpersons of the round tables during the concluding plenary meeting of the High-level Dialogue. A note by the Secretary-General on the organization of work of the High-level Dialogue has been issued as document A/60/864.

Additionally, I would like to draw attention to other organizational matters pertaining to the conduct of meetings.

We turn first to the length of statements. In order to accommodate all the speakers inscribed on the list, I urge speakers to limit their statements to four minutes, on the understanding that that does not preclude the distribution of more extensive texts. I appeal to speakers to cooperate in this respect. In the light of that time frame, I would like to appeal to speakers to deliver their statements at a normal speed so that interpretation may be provided properly. To assist speakers in managing their time, a light system has been installed at the speaker's rostrum, which functions as follows. A green light will be activated at the start of the speaker's statement; an orange light will be activated 30 seconds before the end of the four minutes; and a red light will be activated when the four-minute limit has elapsed.

Furthermore, in order to avoid disruption for the speakers, I would like to ask participants to cooperate by remaining in their seats after a statement has been delivered. In that connection, I would like to invite speakers, after delivering their statements, to exit the General Assembly Hall through room GA-200, located behind the podium, before returning to their seats.

The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Didjob Divungi Di Ndinge, Vice-President of the Republic of Gabon.

Mr. Divungi Di Ndinge (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): Our common Organization — the indefatigable proponent of peace and human dignity — deserves high commendation for the decision to hold this High-level

Dialogue on International Migration and Development. It gives me great pleasure to congratulate the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, on the high quality of the report (A/60/871) that he has submitted to us, which addresses, with clarity and courage, the challenges that we are all confronting, and proposes measures to deal with them.

It is an honour for me to represent here His Excellency El Hadj Omar Bongo Ondimba, President of the Gabonese Republic, who reaffirms Gabon's commitment to the ideals of the United Nations. This is an opportunity for me to share with the Assembly Gabon's experience in the area of migration.

The support of the United Nations for this dialogue shows how crucial a high-level debate is today. It is up to all of us to design, together, true, common strategies that benefit all of our countries, whether countries of origin, transit or destination.

Migration is often caused by particular events, such as periods of economic recession or expansion or situations of conflict. Given today's globalization, one third of the world's people continue to be afflicted by precariousness and poverty. We therefore believe that, if countries are to ensure a sustainable life of dignity, for those who might otherwise become illegal migrants, the international community must concentrate its development activities in certain parts of the world. We all recall the stark pictures of young Africans jumping over barriers in Ceuta and Melilla and, more recently, of those who were shipwrecked in the Canary Islands and the dangers that they faced.

A final solution to the problem will be found only in development and in the provision of a minimum of well-being to those people from poor countries who aspire to a better future, in particular young Africans.

In addition to economic and social factors, protracted conflicts and wars in many regions often cause uncontrolled migration. Because of its small population, its economic potential and its political and social stability, Gabon, unlike many other developing countries, has over the years become a country of destination for many migrants who are seeking a minimum of well-being or a haven of peace.

Migratory flows are increasingly a concern for developed countries, so it is easy to imagine the problems that they cause to a developing country such as Gabon. Such problems relate to our capacity to host and integrate migrants, given that 30 per cent of the population is of foreign origin, to security, given that almost 55 per cent of the incarcerated population of Gabon consists of often illegal immigrants; and to economic dysfunction, given the development of a large informal sector and a large capital outflow.

Broadly speaking, discussions today seem to identify two categories of countries in the context of international migration: countries of origin or transit — usually the poorest or least developed countries; and countries of destination, which are generally the rich or developed countries.

It is important, therefore, that, in seeking solutions and implementing plans of action to help us to better regulate migration, the international community pay particular attention to the specific features of countries, such as Gabon, that have to deal with the challenges of sustainable development and the multitude of problems caused by uncontrolled migration.

With respect to the overall theme of this discussion, I would like to refer to a particular form of migration that does not seem to have been specifically taken into account in the discussions that led up to this High-level Dialogue. For a long time, my country, Gabon, was identified — erroneously, to be sure — by a segment of international opinion as being a host country complicit in the traffic in children for the purposes of economic exploitation.

It is important for me to stress that Gabon is not responsible for the upsurge in the trafficking of children in this part of Africa. In order to lift any ambiguity regarding this stereotype, and in order to effectively combat this scourge, Gabon organized two major subregional consultations in the years 2000 and 2002, with the participation of 17 West African and Central African countries. The debates and the results achieved by the participants made a decisive contribution to efforts to eradicate this scourge.

In addition, operations to raise national awareness about this practice, unworthy of modern societies, have been organized with the assistance of the regional office of the United Nations Children's Fund and certain diplomatic missions of friendly countries.

The Government of Gabon believes that the international community and friendly countries must become more involved in order effectively to combat this scourge, which requires an international response.

In addition to shared solidarity and shared responsibility among countries and the various regions of the world, it is, I am sure, within the countries of origin that we need to look for long-term solutions to the problem of immigration. But we need to do this also at the international level, for example, through a greater involvement of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in regulating migratory flows to make them beneficial both to the countries of origin and to the countries of destination.

These are some preliminary thoughts that the delegation of Gabon, my country, wanted to share with you at this High-level Dialogue on Migration and Development.

Ms. Mapisa-Nqakula (South Africa): Allow me first of all, Madam, to congratulate you on your election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-first session. It is indeed a pleasure to see you presiding over the proceedings, and, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, I wish to express our commitment and support in working constructively with you during your presidency.

In 2003, the General Assembly took a decision to devote a High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development to the multidimensional aspects of international migration and development in order to identify appropriate ways and means of maximizing development benefits and minimizing negative impacts. Several meetings have taken place all over the world in preparation for this important meeting. During these consultations, we in the Group of 77 and China stressed the importance of this dialogue being continued within the United Nations as part of the efforts by the international community to promote a balanced and comprehensive approach to international migration and development. We particularly emphasized the need to build partnerships and ensure coordinated action to develop capacities of developing countries in addressing these challenges. We believe that conducting this dialogue within the framework of the United Nations will help contribute to the strengthening of the multilateral system.

In 2005, the General Assembly summit that met in New York further acknowledged the important nexus between international migration and development and the need to deal with the challenges and opportunities that migration presents to countries of origin, destination and transit, recognizing that international migration carries with it both advantages and disadvantages. There was an acknowledgment that globalization has highlighted the inequalities within and among States. Therefore, for us to successfully address the challenges brought about by migration, we would have to again highlight the need for globalization to become a positive force for all, and for its opportunities and benefits to be evenly shared between the developing and the developed countries.

The effects of international migration on economic and social development highlight the complex relationship between underdevelopment, poverty, social exclusion and migration. In pursuing our efforts to meet the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), we must intensify our focus in addressing foreign direct investment, trade, foreign aid and debt relief, so as to reverse underdevelopment, poverty and skills flight. Meeting the MDGs is central to eradicating poverty and unemployment, placing developing countries on a path of sustainable development, reducing recourse to forced and irregular migration and thereby facilitating migration out of choice.

We also have to ensure good governance at all levels and implement our commitment to international transparency in financial, monetary and trading systems that are open, equitable, rule-based, predictable and non-discriminatory.

Migrants should be located at the centre of the migration debate. The protection of the human rights of migrants, migrant workers and their families, as enunciated in United Nations conventions, as well as in International Labour Organization conventions, is a central component of comprehensive and balanced migration management. Migration facilitation and enforcement must not compromise the rights and dignity of migrants. The exploitation of migrants through mechanisms such as trafficking, as well as migrant smuggling, should be criminalized under domestic and international law. Social pathologies, such as racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and other forms of related intolerance, as well as inhuman and degrading treatment, impact negatively on development and must be eradicated. Forced migration and its economic effects on host countries should be given due consideration. This includes situations of refugees and displaced persons that result from foreign occupation and armed hostilities.

When debating migration, we should acknowledge the very important contributions made by migrants to the development of countries of destination. We should also continue to recognize the increasing feminization of international migration, which requires that we must be sensitive to the circumstances and experiences of female migrants who tend to be disadvantaged in the migration experience. We must, therefore, adopt measures to reduce the vulnerability, exploitation and abuse of female migrants. We also should endorse migration policies that empower migrants. Such policies should enable migrants to capitalize on entrepreneurship programmes through micro-finance and simultaneously enhance their role in the diaspora.

The issue of remittances within the context of migration and development will surely be further debated within the next two days. It nevertheless remains important to highlight the need to address and promote conditions for cheaper, faster and safer transfer of remittances. Remittances must not be considered to be a substitute for investment, trade, foreign aid and debt relief. The need to consider further and analyse how the migration of highly skilled persons and those with advanced education impacts on the development efforts of developing countries remains.

There is a need for a comprehensive and balanced approach to the implementation of migration policy and service delivery. The respective roles and responsibilities of stakeholders regarding migration policymaking, management and development planning must be clearly defined. Capacity in migration policy formulation and migration management should be strengthened, and coherence must be pursued within and between States and also in the formulation of social and economic policies and migration policies. Cooperation between State and non-State stakeholders, and between States, is critical in optimizing the developmental impact of migration. The roles of stakeholders such as government, the business sector, civil society and intergovernmental organizations in the migration-development nexus must be understood and enhanced.

We cannot conclude this debate without focusing on the close and complex relationships between migration and infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis in the lives of migrants. The impact of such diseases on the health of migrants not only compromises lives but affects our efforts to address poverty and underdevelopment.

In conclusion, it is clear that this dialogue we are engaged in cannot be the last word on the challenges of international migration and development. We need to continue with this dialogue in a multilateral context, because it is too important not to be held within the United Nations.

Madam President, we look forward to your summary of the issues raised at the end of this dialogue.

The President: I give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Tarja Filatov, Minister of Labour of Finland.

Ms. Filatov (Finland): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU). The acceding countries Bulgaria and Romania, the candidate countries Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova, align themselves with this statement.

Globalization and significant demographic change mean that we are facing a new era of international mobility. The need for dialogue and cooperation among Governments and international organizations on migration and development has become greater than ever. In the context of such a dialogue, we need to improve policy coherence between these two issues and contribute to the development of holistic approaches and multisectoral responses to international migration.

The European Union welcomes the convening of the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development as a timely step. In that respect, the EU would like to express its sincere appreciation to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for his contribution to placing the issue of migration on the global agenda. The EU firmly believes that the High-level Dialogue can make an important contribution to helping participating countries and organizations make migration work better for development and is ready to play its part in making that happen. In preparing for the Dialogue, the European Union has held intensive discussions and adopted a position that touches on many of the aspects that we will be addressing. This position has been made available to all delegations.

The EU is convinced that migration, when managed effectively, can benefit substantially both the countries of origin and destination as well as the migrants themselves. The EU believes that aspects related to international migration must become an integral part of the development agenda, and development issues, likewise, should be recognized as important elements of migration policies. Migration could also better contribute to development through the formulation and implementation of comprehensive migration policies by countries of origin, transit and destination. Such policies can enhance the positive effects and minimize the negative consequences of migration.

The EU is strongly committed to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Greater consideration should be given to how migration issues could be integrated into the poverty-reduction strategies and national development plans of the partner countries, and how donors could support partners' priorities in this respect.

The EU believes that there is an urgent need for increased policy coherence between various policy areas at the global, regional and national levels. International migration cannot be addressed in isolation, as migration issues are strongly linked to a range of other policy issues such as trade and economy, employment, environment, health and security. It should be noted that decisions related to international policies on migration should not be based on economic aspects alone but also take into consideration the different social, political and cultural dimensions of the issue.

It is important to keep in mind that it is the migrants themselves — men and women — who make positive contributions both to their countries of origin and of destination. This role of diasporas needs to be facilitated.

Respect for the human and labour rights of migrants is essential. The EU instruments are in this regard clear and unequivocal. Labour migration policies need to be supported by integration measures, including equal treatment and the prohibition of discrimination of any kind — with respect to social and economic rights as well — in order to prevent abusive practices and to promote decent and productive work for all migrants. Temporary migration is a phenomenon which is playing increasing role due to rapidly changing labour markets.

The integration of a gender perspective into migration and development policies and the empowerment of women and girls is particularly important, as is special attention to young people. The contribution of migrant women to the economy and to social well-being, as well as the risks they face, must be recognized and addressed properly.

The EU is committed to the full protection of the human rights of migrants, particularly of women and children. They should be paid special attention, in view of the fact that they may be exposed to particular challenges and risks because of their sex or age. The EU is also committed to taking firm action to protect migrants from violence, discrimination, trafficking, exploitation and abuse. The EU underlines the importance of the implementation and non-discriminatory application of the six core human rights instruments.

The EU is willing to support programmes that provide more information on the risks of illegal migration and opportunities for legal migration.

It is necessary to build sufficient capacity in countries of origin and transit to formulate and implement migration policies that contribute to development, as part of their national development strategies. It is essential to pay heed to the needs of the countries of origin and transit of migratory flows.

So-called circular migration, as an aspect of an effectively managed migration policy, can play a useful role in fostering the transfer of skills and knowledge to developing countries. It can increase resources for the exchange of know-how, technology and institutional knowledge. Ways and means of facilitating circular migration should be promoted.

The EU emphasizes the fact that policy responses to "brain drain" need to be incorporated in development and migration strategies and tailored to the specific needs of, and challenges facing, each affected country.

The EU agrees on the importance of remittances and is willing to facilitate efforts to enhance the development impact of remittances. First steps could involve reducing the transfer costs of remittances and increasing the reliability and efficiency of the transfers. Remittances should not, however, be seen as a substitute for official development assistance.

The movement of refugees is a special case. Refugees enjoy a special legal status in accordance with international law. Protection of refugees and internally displaced persons form an integral part of migration policy. Also, it should be noted that refugees, like migrants, can contribute economically, socially and culturally to the welfare of receiving States.

The EU pays special attention to regional approaches. Migration and development are increasingly discussed with our Eastern, Mediterranean and African as well as ACP partners. The question is also on the agenda in the dialogue with Latin American and Asian partners. The regional Euro-African Ministerial Conference on Migration and Development, which was held in Rabat in July 2006, was a success and a first step that should be seen, with its constructive spirit and concrete results, as a model for future cooperation. Migration and development are common concerns for Europe and Africa. We are looking forward to the EU-Africa and Euromed ministerial meetings on migration and development.

Participation of civil society and private sector organizations, including diaspora organizations, in migration and development is of vital importance, not least since they can play an important role especially in promoting integration and employment, preventing discrimination and strengthening good ethnic relations.

The EU believes that the High-level Dialogue is not an end in itself, but rather part of a continuing process. The issue of the follow-up is therefore crucial.

Improved coordination between the various United Nations agencies and other international and regional organizations that deal with migration is essential. In that respect, the EU calls for better use of existing United Nations institutions and processes, and emphasizes the need for efficient work by the Global Migration Group.

The EU believes that a proposed global forum on migration and development would add value, provided that it is informal, voluntary, non-binding and driven by interested United Nations Member States and participants. It should also be consultative and not produce negotiated outcomes. The forum should focus its work on matters of priority and on issues that have the potential to achieve concrete progress regarding development, while taking into account experiences and good practices. Its work should be closely coordinated with the work of the Global Migration Group.

The Dialogue will start a process that promotes effective and long-lasting responses to the challenges and opportunities of migration and development. The EU is ready to play an active role in the work of the Dialogue and its round tables, and in its follow-up.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Tonio Borg, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Justice of Malta.

Mr. Borg (Malta): My delegation fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by the preceding speaker from Finland on behalf of the European Union. Migration poses one of the key challenges of the twenty-first century, with global economic and social repercussions which affect the countries from which migrants emigrate, the countries to which they migrate and, of course, the migrants themselves.

We congratulate the Secretary-General's Special Representative, Mr. Peter Sutherland, on the quality and comprehensiveness of the report on international migration and development (A/60/871). The report vividly highlights the clear linkages which exist between migration and development, as well as the opportunities for co-development in the countries both of origin and of destination.

Malta itself faced the opportunities and challenges of migration in the middle decades of the last century. It benefited directly from the economic and social advantages that flowed from such migration, not only in easing unemployment in Malta, but also from the inflow of sums of money sent back. As a result of those two or three decades of emigration, the Maltese diaspora is now to be found in countries as far afield as Australia, Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom and elsewhere, contributing positively — culturally, economically and socially — to the life of the country of adoption.

Today, however, Malta is confronted by the new and often tragic phenomenon of illegal immigration. I say tragic, because a human tragedy is unfolding in the central Mediterranean area, with hundreds of immigrants, victims of smugglers of human beings, losing their lives in their attempt to cross over to Europe, on the very threshold of Europe.

The report before us therefore rightly emphasizes that migration should occur in a safe, legal and fair manner. But it devotes only a limited section to the pressing issue of illegal immigration. For Malta — one of

the most densely populated countries in the world, placed at the southernmost tip of Europe and at the crossroads of migratory routes from Africa through the central Mediterranean — and, I dare say, for other countries in Europe, illegal immigration also poses socio-economic problems of the most serious magnitude. It is a problem which we sincerely hope that the high-level group will address.

We would like to see the high-level group commit itself to adopting a holistic approach to illegal immigration. There are five separate elements to the problem. They can be broadly defined as: first, the need for comprehensive arrangements for the return of illegal immigrants to their countries of origin and their readmission and reintegration; secondly, the need for improvements to the efficiency and effectiveness of border management in countries of origin and of transit; thirdly, and related to the second element, the elimination of human smuggling and trafficking — a topic to which the report makes very telling reference; fourthly, the need for improvements to the management of illegal immigrants by transit countries; and, fifthly, better management of migrants in destination countries if it can be shown that they have genuine cause to migrate and the destination country wishes to receive them.

I offer for consideration a number of specific actions. There needs to be a regular and constructive dialogue between countries of origin and destination countries to strengthen cooperation and to identify common solutions. The generous allocation of development aid — not humanitarian aid — for the eradication of poverty in countries of origin should be encouraged. And we see no reason why this development aid should not be tied to returns and readmissions as an incentive to closer cooperation.

As to the need for the elimination of human smuggling and trafficking, we must find ways of establishing closer security cooperation between destination countries, transit countries and countries of origin to eradicate those inhumane operations.

We must work for the better integration of migrants in destination countries through the adoption of a long-term, sustainable — I stress sustainable — migration management approach, as well as through the establishment of a regular dialogue on migration matters on a regional and global level between the countries of destination, origin and transit that are most affected.

In conclusion, while Malta is fully committed to the central concept of the report — that there is a direct relationship between legal migration and development, especially as it affects the reduction of poverty — we are equally convinced that illegal immigration must, in turn, be properly controlled. I hope that members will agree that that is work that the high-level group should now embark upon and follow up energetically.

The President: I now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Priya Manickchand, Minister for Human Services and Social Security of Guyana.

Ms. Manickchand (Guyana): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the countries of the Rio Group.

With its multidimensional aspects, migration encompasses issues well beyond the purview of development policy. In that context, our meeting here specifically to discuss the varied facets of international migration gives substance to the recognition of both its linkage to, and impact on, development and the need for its full consideration by the international community.

The Rio Group is therefore delighted with the convening, after more than a decade in the planning, of this first-ever high-level United Nations event entirely devoted to migration and development. We thank the Secretary-General sincerely for his report (A/60/871), which has facilitated our deliberations in important ways. We also wish to express our gratitude to other agencies and actors, including civil society, for their vigilance and contributions throughout the preparatory process, which have also enriched our dialogue.

The realities of globalization have intensified the linkages and impacts of international migration, making the possible benefits and challenges it proffers of greater significance and immediacy. All countries, to a lesser or greater extent, are impacted by the phenomenon, whether as countries of origin, transit or destination, through the loss or gain of skilled labour, the movement of temporary workers in response to economic demands, the flow of financial remittances, the revitalization of cultures through significant interaction of diverse peoples and the infusion of fresh ideas, perspectives and energies, the transfer of knowledge and technology, the transnationalization and interplay of security threats and concerns, trafficking in

persons born to diasporic communities, exploitation of and discrimination against some migrants, globalized educational preferences, sporting contacts and the influence of socio-economic and political conditions in different societies.

Mr. Wenaweser (Liechtenstein), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Without doubt, the profound impact of international migration on development will continually engender debate. However, in pursuit of sustainable development, its effects cannot be ignored. The salience of our dialogue is enhanced by the belief of our Group that international migration proffers a valuable contribution to development, with greater and more structured collaboration at all levels.

Issues relating to international migration hold a special significance for Latin American and Caribbean societies. Many benefits have accrued from the increased mobility of our people. Many citizens have enhanced their lives and livelihoods. An even greater percentage has enjoyed advantages from the flow of financial remittances. On the other hand, our countries have also not been exempt from the adverse effects: the deep impact of the brain drain, the reinforcement of systemic inequalities, the indeterminate developmental impacts of remittances and disappointing results in actualizing brain circulation strike at the heart of efforts to achieve sustainable development and, more critically, the Millennium Development Goals. For the Rio Group, the balance sheet is therefore mixed.

We believe that our own consistent endeavours to address the impact of international migration on our development are best complemented by greater international collaboration to address the multidimensional, multilayered and multisectoral nature of migration. In that regard, we would like to avail ourselves of this opportunity to outline some of the priorities.

First, the often tenuous legal, social, economic and political status of migrants places them at particular risk of infringements of their human rights. That is especially the case in relation to women and young people. We support the strengthening of arrangements of both a multilateral and bilateral nature to ensure the protection of the rights of all migrants on a systematic basis.

A second priority aspect relates to the importance of helping countries to cope with the demands of migration in the context of development. Many countries are severely constrained in their capacity to develop adequate migration systems. Effective systems require a high degree of coordination of different types, including intrasectoral, intersectoral, inter-institutional, international and interfunctional coordination. More particularly, implementing systems to ensure optimal benefit from the flow of financial remittances, linkages with diasporas to effect brain circulation, co-development strategies and best practices, the collecting analysing and dissemination of timely and reliable data on migration and greater assessment of developmental impacts bear mentioning.

The third priority emanates from the necessity for a more structured global discourse on international migration and development. The global nature of the problems, challenges and opportunities presented by international migration transcend isolated national responses. In addition to national efforts and bilateral and other cooperative approaches, there is a need for a global perspective to enhance efficacious action. The multilateral framework for action must be strengthened. The Group welcomes the Secretary-General's proposal for a global consultative forum on international migration. We believe such a forum would indeed constitute a useful interim arrangement to promote greater coherence in the absence of agreement on more permanent mechanisms to enable sustained attention to, and holistic treatment of, migration by the General Assembly.

The Rio Group is committed to working to surmount the significant hurdles we face in order to optimize the benefits of international migration for development. We commend to the High-level Dialogue the processes we have developed and look forward to sharing further insights on our own national experiences in the round-table sessions, in order to contribute to the elaboration of best practices. We trust that partners will find virtue, as we do, in giving unequivocal support to further follow-up measures and mechanisms at the global level to ensure that the rich gains of our consultations are not lost and that we all — as individual States, as groups and as the international community — are better placed to effect the governance of international migration to benefit development.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Ulla Tørnæs, Minister for Development Cooperation of Denmark.

Ms. Tørnæs (Denmark): Globalization has brought the world unprecedented prosperity — economically, socially and culturally. It has increased interaction between countries and regions. It has improved general knowledge about other parts of the world and decreased distances, mentally and physically. The number of people who have the desire and the capacity to move to other places has grown rapidly. Today, migrants account for almost 200 million people, or 3 per cent of the world's population. But we are treading on new ground, and there is a profound need for more knowledge and understanding of how migration and development interact. I hope that this High-level Dialogue meeting will provide a platform for further joint efforts to look into this issue.

Today I would like to address three issues which preoccupy the Danish Government: first, how migration is managed; secondly, how the Danish Development Corporation addresses the issue of international migration in practical terms; and thirdly, how to follow up on the Dialogue meeting.

The ultimate goal for our efforts must be to pave the way for migration as a choice, a choice to be made both by the countries receiving the migrants and by the migrants leaving their countries. Migration is definitely not the solution to eradicate poverty in developing countries. We can all agree on that. Unmanaged migration would drain developing countries of their human resources, and uncontrolled influx of migrants in receiving countries would result in overload and instability. Managed migration is the only way.

For the Danish Government, it is crucial that labour migration be based on the needs of the labour markets. Demand and supply must balance. Denmark considers the protection of migrants, refugees and internally displaced persons to form an equally important part of integrated and effective migration management. That entails an obligation for all countries to respect international refugee law, in particular the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. It also entails a special focus on the rights of women in these circumstances.

But it is a precondition for well-managed migration that all countries acknowledge their responsibility to readmit and facilitate the readmission of their own nationals if they have been staying illegally in other countries. Having said that, all returns obviously have to be undertaken in a manner that is safe, humane and imbued with full respect for fundamental human rights.

At the core of the migration development issue is how migration can contribute to the development of the home country. To address this question, it is important to look at the structural causes of migration. Poverty and underdevelopment, lack of opportunities in terms of employment, education and basic freedoms, together with personal security concerns, are the main motives for people to choose to migrate. These motives are not different from the motives that drove poor Europeans to leave for America in the past.

But persistent efforts by countries of origin are needed to tackle the structural causes of migration. Every Government should see it as its responsibility to create and sustain the conditions for a society where people can secure a livelihood and build a future. At the same time, we have to recognize that even with strong commitment by countries of origin, development will not come by itself. A number of challenges are global and require solutions that poor countries cannot deliver on their own.

The Danish Development Corporation is already focusing on efforts to improve human development and promote access to education and labour through education and business sector programmes, with a special focus on Africa. The Danish Government will assign special priorities to promote good governance, democracy and human rights in the coming years. At the same time, we are intensifying our efforts to strengthen opportunities for the private sector to act as an engine of economic growth. In that regard, let me point to the importance of increased trade as one of the most important engines of growth for poor countries.

Denmark will work hard to ensure a truly development-friendly result, including trade liberalization and reduction of agricultural subsidies. We hope that the Doha negotiations will resume soon. These areas are all of vital importance to ensure progress and development in countries of origin. A major challenge ahead will be how to improve coherence between migration policy and other affected policy areas.

It is necessary to investigate how migration issues can be integrated into poverty reduction strategies and national development plans of the

partner countries and how donors can support partners' priorities in this respect. Within one area of the migration development agenda, Denmark has been at the forefront. We have gained considerable experience with regard to our Regions of Origin initiative.

Let me conclude by addressing the issue of follow-up to this High-level Dialogue meeting. The Danish Government sees this meeting as part of a new process. The discussion of migration and development at a global level has now been initiated and we must ensure that the opportunity provided by this High-level Dialogue meeting is not wasted.

At the same time, we should draw on existing experience and established structures to avoid overlap or duplication of effort. We should avoid the establishment of new permanent structures and we should rely on regional processes when taking concrete action. Denmark considers the Global Migration Group to be an important player in a possible future follow-up mechanism.

I have great expectations for a future collaboration within this area, and Denmark is ready to participate actively in deliberations during the coming months on how to ensure follow-up to this process. We appreciate the Belgian offer to host the first migration and development forum meeting. Migration is an intrinsic part of globalization. We are all aware of that. Migration and development is about ensuring that people are on the move for the right reasons.

The Acting President: I next give the floor to His Excellency the Honourable Major General Moeng Pheto, Minister of Labour and Home Affairs of Botswana.

Mr. Pheto (Botswana): Allow me to congratulate Her Excellency the President on her election to the helm of this body. My delegation is confident that her vast diplomatic experience will steer our deliberations successfully during this important dialogue.

The High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development is a milestone in the global discussions on one of the most important issues of our time. We thank the Secretary-General for his illuminating report and welcome the Global Commission report on international migration, which brings to our attention the important international migration issue and, above all, its relationship to development and the imperative need to prudently manage it for the benefit of all.

Migration has always been part of human behaviour, influenced by the desire and quest for a better life, safety and security. The phenomenon has accelerated with the advent of globalization. This dialogue is a clear testimony that migration is a global issue that cannot be ignored and consequently requires international cooperation, partnership and coordination.

It should also be an opportunity to openly deal with the root causes of migration for, in doing so, there is hope that the proposed solutions may have a long-lasting effect.

Allow me to share our national experience in that connection. Over the past 40 years, Botswana has evolved from being one of the poorest countries in the world to attain the status of a middle-income country. With a literacy rate of about 69 per cent and a small population of a little over a million in 1993, it is very clear that the country could not have achieved that on its own. It did so through the help of migrants from all over the world, including professionals from different fields of human endeavour. In addition, we have benefited from investors who created much needed employment opportunities that has contributed to the social welfare of our people. Botswana is grateful for the tremendous contribution those foreigners have made in building our economy.

We have also had thousands of our people going abroad to look for employment opportunities, as well as for educational purposes. Over the years, some of those citizens have come back home having acquired expertise in different areas. That has proved to be extremely beneficial to our national development. In that sense, we have been both a country of origin and a receiving State.

This is a story to which most of us can relate. The challenge, as always, is the ability to strike a balance between the interests of the receiving States and those of the sending States. There are issues of varying development levels among countries and between regions, continents and hemispheres. There are also challenges of nation-building and democracy. Not very far from those are issues of security and health.

Governments, in the first instance, carry the responsibility of improving the lives of their people by exploiting both the human potential of their subjects and the natural resources found within their borders. The international community, in the second instance, has a moral obligation to support the efforts of countries

in the throes of development. Foreign direct investment, bilateral cooperation and multilateral arrangements have a significant role to play in that respect.

A case in point is the HIV/AIDS scourge, which threatens much of the developing world and in particular sub-Saharan Africa. Not only are countries compelled to divert their meagre resources from development to wage war against the pandemic; the same countries also lose the few health workers they have to the developed world, thus worsening the scarce-skills gaps in the health sector. A further complication is that, in practical terms, it is difficult to treat one part of the community — citizens — while excluding other community members — migrants — and still hope to overcome the disease.

The disease brings to the fore the argument for collaborative efforts across the world through a comprehensive and coherent framework. That international solidarity and complementary action should extend to all aspects of international migration.

Let me conclude by reaffirming Botswana's commitment to the continuing dialogue on international migration and development. We have already put some policies in place to manage international migration, and we look forward to learning from other countries' experiences. We also stand ready to exchange views on how to collectively address the migration challenges.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Chakib Benmoussa, Minister of the Interior of Morocco.

Mr. Benmoussa (Morocco) (*spoke in Arabic*): I am honoured to convey the gratitude of the Kingdom of Morocco to the organizers of this High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development. I should like in particular to thank Secretary-General Kofi Annan for launching this important initiative by placing the issue of migration at the very centre of the concerns of the international community, under the auspices of the United Nations.

The Kingdom of Morocco believes that the United Nations is the most appropriate mechanism for harmonizing and carrying forward the efforts of the various specialized agencies in regard to migration. The ultimate aim is to find a comprehensive and balanced solution to the problems of migration, incorporating the multilateral aspects into a single context for consideration.

The preparations for this High-level Dialogue have drawn attention to the phenomenon of migration, to the issues of regional diversity and specificity, and to the expectations and priorities of the various partners. As we all support this open Dialogue, we commend the enlightened initiative of the Secretary-General to convene a global forum bringing together Governments, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and civil society with a view to giving further consideration to and intensifying action in this very sensitive area. In that regard, the Kingdom of Morocco is eager to see regional action contributing to the work of this forum. We are also pleased to see such organizations as the International Organization for Migration gain in credibility, demonstrate their effectiveness, and serve as strong partners in the organization of this forum.

I am very proud to affirm that the Kingdom of Morocco has also contributed to the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development through its courageous initiatives and model measures. We have always played a lead role at every level of regional cooperation. The Euro-African Conference on Migration and Development, held in Rabat in July 2006, was a precedent-setting endeavour, the first time a meeting of that type was held between European and African countries, with a view to opening a fruitful debate between the countries of destination, origin and transit affected by the phenomenon of migration. The Conference proved to be extremely important, given the fruitful dialogue that took place there and the recommendations that emanated therefrom. We hope that the Rabat final declaration will be adopted as one of the official documents of this High-level Dialogue.

The ultimate objective of this Dialogue is to embody the joint responsibility of finding structural solutions through sustainable development, the promotion of legal, regulated migration and respect for the dignity and rights of migrants. It is important to stress the contribution that migrants can make — one that is essential to many modern countries. Furthermore, cultural diversity is a cornerstone of development and integration, ensuring respect for the cultural specificity of migrants and promoting social harmony. In this context, we are very proud of our Moroccan migrants, who have succeeded in reconciling respect for their adopted countries and firm allegiance to their homeland.

We believe that it is necessary to facilitate individual mobility as the best response to those who would seek to reject and exclude migrants. Legal immigration further represents a severe blow to those who are engaged in human smuggling. The main priority for this High-level Dialogue must be to address the economic aspects of migration through sustainable development.

The Government of the Kingdom of Morocco has embarked on a national initiative to further human development, combat social exclusion and set in motion income-generating projects. That initiative is considered to be a model for social projects that would aid countries of origin to reduce outflows of illegal migrants. There is still a need to combat smuggling networks actively and firmly, and today more than ever, appropriate international and regional action is required, within a framework of coordination and consultation.

Mr. Tidjani (Cameroon), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The Kingdom of Morocco has always been a crossroads of civilizations and a tireless proponent of openness and tolerance. Migration in all its dimensions plays an essential role in enriching and diversifying our country. We hope that through this High-level Dialogue we shall be able to take up and successfully meet the challenge before us. Difficult though that may seem, it is not impossible. We wish to see migration vested again with its noble mission as a tool for rapprochement among peoples and nations. May this High-level Dialogue be successful.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Oumar Hamadoun Dicko, Minister for Malians Residing Abroad and African Integration of Mali.

Mr. Dicko (Mali) *(spoke in French)*: Allow me, Mr. President, on behalf of the President of Mali, His Excellency Mr. Amadou Toumani Touré, and the Government and people of Mali, to extend our warmest congratulations to Ambassador Al-Khalifa on her election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-first session. The outstanding qualities she possesses as an experienced diplomat will, I am sure, enable us to achieve satisfactory results during her mandate. I would like to assure her of the support of the Government of Mali for the discharge of her high mission.

I wish also to pay a well-deserved tribute to her predecessor for the sustained quality of his stewardship of the work of the sixtieth session and for organizing the present Dialogue — a pioneering endeavour in history.

I would also like to thank His Excellency the Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, for his vision, his commitment and his leadership, of which we as Africans are all very proud.

A local newspaper has rightly noted that not a day passes without us seeing images on the television news of would-be illegal immigrants dead from hunger or thirst, if not simply drowned or shot down along the way, before reaching the other side. Those intolerable images give the impression that immigration is a crime and that would-be immigrants are criminals who go to Europe and elsewhere to steal other people's daily bread and jobs and to create insecurity and disorder.

The scandal of immigration is not in those circumstances. It lies in structural adjustment programmes, in agricultural subsidies, in the increasing pauperization of our rural areas, in malgovernance of our States, and in the harmful effects of globalization. It lies in invasive and acculturating media that day after day proffer images of the Western El Dorado to millions of young people who have no hope and scant prospects of employment.

The scandal of immigration lies elsewhere. It lies in the criminal exploitation of the credulity of our youth by mafia-style organizations that establish new financial networks through a new slave trade. It also lies in the shameless exploitation of clandestine immigrants compelled to work secretly, often more than others, beyond the limits established by law for meagre salaries, and frequently under conditions that are hardly bearable.

The scandal of immigration lies in the fantastic commissions charged by the institutions that transfer funds, which are based mainly in the rich countries. The magnitude of the sums involved — which, according to the International Organization for Migration, amounted in 2005 to some $170 billion sent from the countries of the North to those of the South — should encourage further discussion of the ways and means for making those remittances more beneficial to the developing countries.

Today, when the concept of innovative financing is all the vogue, a more intelligent organization of those means of financing for development — which are four times more powerful than official development assistance — would no doubt provide a way of emerging from the vicious and vitiated circle of multiple exploitation. Considering the amounts involved, it is highly likely that migrants' remittances will soon be of strategic importance. It is time for us Africans to channel the flow of our migrants' funds towards productive investment and thus towards the sustainable development of our various regions.

Allow me at this point to recall a few historical facts. Throughout the nineteenth century and in the first half of the twentieth, as we heard earlier, over 60 million Europeans emigrated, primarily to the Americas — I repeat, 60 million. North America remains the main host region and continues to be the destination of choice of Europeans. Between 1845 and 1850, over 2 million Irish people went from Great Britain to the United States following the appearance of a parasitic fungus that wiped out the potato crops, which were the staple diet of the Irish population. Italy, Spain and Portugal, to mention but a few countries, were countries of origin for centuries, until the late 1980s. Their diasporas flooded the world with their tremendous talents. And what about America itself — the finished product and meeting point, the point of convergence of all the diasporas of the world? The Statue of Liberty is there to bear witness to that.

The immigration of Africans occurs first and foremost within Africa. To take just the figures for Mali, my country — a major country of immigration and emigration — of the 4 million Malians throughout the world, 3.5 million live on the African continent and 200,000 in Europe. Of those in Europe, slightly more than half, about 120,000, live in France. We are speaking, then, about some 3 per cent of the Malian diaspora that live in Europe.

Listeners will agree with me that this is nothing to get excited about. Of the 912 million Africans, barely 2 million sub-Saharan Africans live in Europe. Contrary to popular lore, clandestine immigration, which must indeed be combated, accounts for barely one per cent of migratory flows.

If we consider combined statistics, a little more than 50 per cent of legal immigration is for family reunion. According to United Nations assessments, the number of migrants rose from 100 million in 1980 to 200 million in 2005 and could double in the next 20 years. It is therefore inevitable that immigration will be a major challenge for the twenty-first century.

Africa is affected in more than one way. The difference in the fertility rate between Africa and the rest of the world has reached record levels. That differential is particularly high with regard to Europe, which is growing older while Africa is increasingly growing younger — 1.4 children born per woman in Europe, compared to 5.4 in sub-Saharan Africa. Those figures speak for themselves.

Pascal Lamy, Director-General of the World Trade Organization, recently launched a heartfelt and troubling appeal to the international community. Nobody is unaware that for the nearly 3 billion small-scale farmers whose livelihoods depend upon agriculture, competition between all the agricultures in the world on a totally liberalized global market would mean certain economic death. What could be more normal in that case than for farmers in general, and the cotton growers of developing countries in particular, to refuse to accept a system that is designed to exclude more than 3 billion people?

In Mali, a major cotton producer, nearly 2 million people live directly from cotton production and nearly 5 million indirectly. Unfortunately, they cannot live off the fruits of their labour. In Africa, some 10 million people depend directly on cotton, and three times that number suffer indirectly from the difficulties experienced in that sector. So we must not bury our heads in the sand. We must find appropriate responses to immigration as a whole. To do that, we need to find urgent responses to unfair trade, to the constant deterioration of the terms of trade and to subsidies that kill African agriculture. From 2002 to 2005, American cotton producers received about a billion dollars in public subsidies, according to Oxfam, while the producers in Africa lost 450 million dollars and continued to grow poorer, not because they worked less but because the law of the strongest continued to prevail.

We should not be afraid of words. Prevention and the fight against illegal migration and its mafia-like networks must go hand in hand with the promotion of possibilities for legal migration. The two are linked. A purely security-oriented response is not the solution. Similarly, a purely humanitarian response is not

realistic. We must find a solution that intelligently combines both security and humanitarian considerations. Such an approach is feasible, possible and desirable.

Indeed, while respecting the rules established by sovereign States regarding the entry and the length of stay of foreigners in their countries, residence permits could be adapted according to a number of objective criteria, for example, length of stay in the destination country, marital situation of the applicant, situation of children and their school enrolment, applicant's employment situation, health and police record, degree of integration in the host country, et cetera.

Moreover, many possibilities are being considered which should be enhanced, such as co-development, which is a powerful instrument of cooperation for development; effective management of financial flows — noted by several speakers; close involvement of the scientific, technical, economic, cultural and artistic diaspora in the development process of their country of origin; strengthening decentralized cooperation; strengthening regional integration in Africa, in particular, establishment of poles of excellence in Africa to counter the brain drain; unstinting efforts to stamp out illicit immigration networks; inclusion of migration issues in Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers; strengthening cooperation in regard to circular migration and migration of labour; protection of migrants' rights; and a wide-ranging campaign to provide information and raise awareness at the local, regional, continental and international level regarding migration and its different impacts.

This list is not exhaustive. I am sure that the various round tables will allow us to probe more deeply each of these issues.

To conclude, there is an urgent need for genuine cooperation on the question of migration, in the form of concerted and shared management. We cannot say often enough that we must take maximum advantage of all that migrants can offer in terms of knowledge, know-how, amassed experienced and potential wealth to accelerate the development of our countries. Such is one of the main purposes of the department I have the honour to direct. The recent effort by a number of States and non-governmental institutions and actors to launch world initiatives on international migration is welcome. The High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development offers an opportunity for greater interaction between such initiatives and greater coherence among migration policies.

Mali fully embraces this approach and welcomes the holding of this High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development. My country, Mali, also supports the establishment of a global forum on migration and development. I am sure that that forum will provide an opportunity to boost cooperation among Governments and partnership between States and the diaspora and to ensure international follow-up to this Dialogue that has been initiated. We greatly appreciate Belgium's offer to host that forum because we should think and act together to ensure that migration constitutes an opportunity for all and not a threat to anyone.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Luis Ernesto Derbez Bautista, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Mexico.

Mr. Derbez (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): The migratory phenomenon has gained greater importance in both the international and national agendas. It has finally been acknowledged that migration transcends domestic legislative frameworks of countries as well as the bilateral relations they enter into and increasingly should be seen in multilateral terms. This recognition is a step in the right direction. No country can address problems relating to migration by itself. Now, more than ever, it is imperative to increase cooperation and engagement among nations.

Throughout the life of the United Nations, the subject has been dealt with in different forums and bodies, albeit unsystematically. It is necessary to adopt an approach that guarantees greater international coherence. It is very worrying that, as the Secretary-General's report emphasizes, in the face of the current increase in migration flows due to interdependence and globalization, there is a tendency to treat migrants as if they were another commodity, to be managed like merchandise. This trend is quite paradoxical if we take into account that one of the major efforts of the last century was to recognize the individual as a human being, as a subject and not an object of development strategies.

In this perspective, Mexico welcomes the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development as the starting point of a process that will usher in a new vision, a new migration culture. Mexico

reiterates that it is necessary to foster deeper and fuller understanding of the phenomenon on the basis of which positive inputs can be made and a partial approach avoided. In particular, it is of utmost importance to avoid treating migrants as goods to be exchanged or, even worse, as criminals.

We have to overcome prejudices and foster better understanding of this phenomenon. This topic must be placed on the global agenda and quick fixes should be replaced by medium- and long-term responses. Mexico believes that it is crucial to favour approaches aimed at improved management of this phenomenon. However, it is necessary to adopt policies addressing the root causes and effects of migration and, above all, migrant-centred policies that consider the migrant as a person of unassailable dignity.

At the same time, it is important to promote an open and inclusive discussion that, disregarding speeches and motives, provides an objective analysis of the challenges that migration poses to all States, be they of origin, transit or destination. This new vision should be based on the principle of shared responsibility because we must recognize that every country must adopt a co-responsible approach if we are to be successful in addressing the challenges raised by migration.

Mexico is a country of origin for migrants, most of whom go northwards, and at the same time a transit and destination country. It is for this reason that the numerous consequences of migration are very apparent in our country. The participation of Mexico in this High-level Dialogue is based on our commitment to the principle of co-responsibility and the strengthening of international cooperation in order to address international migration. For this reason, we recognize our own responsibility for providing domestic conditions so that Mexicans can find better opportunities at home. Mexico is of the view that, for a global migration strategy to be effective, it should include four elements.

First, we support full respect for human and labour rights and dignity of migrants. The individual should take priority in our thinking and in our action. Migration cannot be confined to the issue of security. Mexico supports an integral approach to the phenomenon that takes into account the economic, social, cultural and, of course, security aspects of the issue.

The second element of a global approach to migration is greater international cooperation based on increasing the development of economic competitiveness of the countries of origin of migrants. That will certainly be reflected in a reduction in migratory flows.

Thirdly, it is necessary to recognize the greater interconnection among labour markets and the need to develop new schemes that will ensure the mobility and circularity of persons, as well as the regularization of the migrant status of those who have resided for long periods of time in the country of destination.

Mexico proposes as a fourth element a reform of the international organizations currently dealing with the issue of migration, with a view to adopting an integral long-term approach. The democratic and inclusive approach to the migratory phenomenon as promoted by Mexico requires for its analysis on the international level the participation of all stakeholders involved and an open, inclusive and comprehensive dialogue that involves the United Nations bodies.

The suffering of millions of people requires that we do our best today. I am certain that this High-level Dialogue is a great opportunity to address the phenomenon of migration from a comprehensive perspective, identifying topics that will consolidate the migration agenda and agreeing on modalities for the necessary follow-up.

Mexico supports the establishment of an international migration forum linked to the United Nations. We thank the Government of Belgium for offering to host the forum's first meeting next year. This Dialogue and the forum should enable us to build the conceptual and institutional framework necessary to ensure that the United Nations and the rest of the international community coherently address the phenomenon of migration.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Mohammed Luftor Rahman Khan Azad, Member of Parliament and Minister of State for Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment of Bangladesh.

Mr. Azad (Bangladesh): The Bangladesh delegation most warmly welcomes the President of the General Assembly and her Bureau and congratulates her on her well-deserved election. It is our firm conviction that, under her able stewardship, this meeting will have effective results. Our appreciation is

owed to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report (A/60/871).

Migration operates as an equilibrating mechanism at the national and international levels. Many developed countries have labour shortages, while many developing countries have surplus labour. Those factors are the main determinants of labour migration. The liberalization of policies on the part of the receiving countries can generate significant gains in welfare.

The relationship between migration and development is now widely recognized. However, under the current architecture, migration is, in most cases, a costly phenomenon that poor people cannot afford. That situation must be expeditiously brought to a halt. We need to ensure unhindered market access for the poor, unskilled and unemployed sector of society at a nominal cost. That would facilitate the timely achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

Migrant workers are vulnerable to exploitation. Efforts are needed to fully eliminate exploitation and discrimination and to ensure fair treatment, decent work, a minimum wage and recognition of their status.

Facilitating remittance flows is another action with a potentially high payoff. Host countries must ensure the unhindered transfer of funds to the countries of origin with minimal transaction costs.

Bangladesh is a labour-surplus country and thus belongs to the supply side of the world labour market. International migration has taken centre stage in the policy discourse of our country. The present Government of Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, immediately after she assumed office, established the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment. Recently, the Government adopted a comprehensive overseas employment policy. That gender-sensitive policy was drafted in consultation with all relevant stakeholders. These measures are being undertaken to ensure safe migration opportunities for all people.

Bangladesh seeks a regime to facilitate the movement of temporary service providers under Mode 4 of the General Agreement on Trade in Services. We all recognize the immense potential in this field. We urge the international community to undertake expeditious measures aimed at liberalizing markets for the movement of service providers under mode 4. The regime could also help to address the challenges of migrant smuggling and trafficking in persons.

All labour-sending countries should set up a negotiating forum to further the cause of the movement of service providers. We hope that that proposal will receive favourable consideration by this House.

The momentum generated by this High-level Dialogue must be maintained to lay the foundation for enhanced international cooperation to optimize the benefits of migration. We should not miss this opportunity.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Mehmet Aydin, Minister of State of Turkey.

Mr. Aydin (Turkey): Allow me to join previous speakers in congratulating the Secretary-General and his colleagues on the organization of this timely and critical High-level Dialogue, which is indispensable for understanding the current migration predicament and its multidimensional management.

A close and complex relationship exists between migration and the economic, social, cultural and even political development of the societies involved. The future of many international relations in general, and of international politics in particular, depends largely on how we approach the issue of migration, which is in need of rationally and scientifically coordinated strategies and action plans both at the national level and at the level of countries of origin and destination.

In particular, such strategies and policies regarding integration require a creative and honest dialogue in order to establish practical parameters for economic, socio-cultural and political adaptation that are compatible with the implementation of democratic values as well as fundamental human rights.

That point is extremely important, since the current migration predicament is tending to become a very sensitive issue not only in terms of economic development, but also in terms of world security and peace. In many parts of the world immigrant populations are experiencing irksome difficulties in accessing education, housing and job opportunities. Unbearable discrimination — racism and cultural discrimination in particular — are becoming a major issue in many parts of the world. Various culturalist and civilizationalist arguments have begun to demand not humane integration, but clearly forced assimilation

that shows little respect for cultural identities and diversity that are in keeping with commonly shared values. Needless perhaps to say, no one has the right to ask us to be tolerant towards cultural differences that infringe upon fundamental human rights, but it ought to be borne in mind that creative and sustainable integration and coexistence can be realized only in a common space defined by such values as respect for human dignity, justice, the rule of law, tolerance, cultural pluralism and so on.

Integration is the key issue, and it necessitates an integral and dynamic perspective on the part of the countries of origin and destination.

Economic development is only one component of human development as a whole. Without adequate legal and socio-cultural rights and freedoms, immigrant communities can hardly be in a position to feel themselves at home. Discrimination of all kinds tends to alienate people, especially young people. To avoid that, we have to be engaged in a dialogue that rests on reliable knowledge, critical communication and honest existential and morally responsible involvement. We have to take the relevant international institutions, their decisions and efforts very seriously.

Turkey, which is a country of origin, transit and destination as far as migration is concerned, has always been ready to be an active partner in such noble engagement. That is why it supports, for example, the establishment of a consultative forum, which is recommended in the Secretary-General's report. We are not happy to see that, except for a few countries, many migration receiving States have not yet ratified the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.

To conclude, immigrants shall continue to contribute to the demographic structures, economies and social security systems of the countries of destination. However, their contribution will depend primarily on solutions to their own problems. For that purpose, first, countries of destination should liberalize restrictive immigration policies that allow the admission only of well-educated and highly skilled migrants. Secondly, countries of destination should promote investment projects to employ unskilled workers locally in the countries of origin. Thirdly, countries of destination should ratify the international conventions that guarantee migrants' human rights. Lastly, effective international cooperation on the prevention of the abuse of immigrants, illegal migration and trafficking in human beings should be among the priority targets.

We hope that this High-level Dialogue will be instrumental in providing a better understanding of all aspects of migration and development.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Arturo Brion, Minister of Labour of the Philippines.

Mr. Brion (Philippines): The Philippines has more than 8 million Filipinos overseas, representing 10 per cent of our population. Those are 8 million reasons for me to stand before the General Assembly today to support the convening of this High-level Dialogue.

International migration, in the form in which it is happening today, is a familiar experience for us. We first launched the Philippine overseas employment programme in 1974 as a conveniently available measure to ease our country's high unemployment and foreign exchange problems.

Over the years, we have found that it is more than a transient strategy that we should nurture; we have discovered that it is a national strategy that can have profound effects on our people's lives, our economy and those of the countries receiving our workers. Thus, contract migration evolved for us into an endeavour principally characterized by protection for our overseas workers, the families they leave behind, and concern for the receiving countries hosting our workers.

We have expressed our policies on migration through the Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995, our principal law providing the institutional and legal framework for Filipino overseas employment.

Migration, in the current sense of massive movements of people across borders, by its very nature gives rise to complicated issues that go beyond the mere hosting of foreign nationals within one's borders. It is a complex phenomenon involving the possibility of conflicts in the political, economic, social, cultural and demographic spheres for the countries of origin, transit and destination. Thus, its management, even in the best of times, is a complex matter.

A significant step in addressing those complex issues is to view them positively, in the sense that migration, whether inflow or outflow, is dictated by a

country's needs, and that the satisfaction of those needs is sufficient motive for countries participating in migration parties to cooperate. Where needs can be satisfied so that potential for gain exists, reason dictates that countries should communicate and cooperate with each other to spread and share the adjustment pains and thus achieve maximized gains for everyone.

Another significant step is to view migration and the cooperation that its handling requires through the prism of development.

The development of any nation requires assets and resources and their effective use. In migration, people and their skills are the assets that result in productive gain. Those are the assets that receiving nations utilize for their economic activities. Those are the same assets that earn the remittances the home country receives from its overseas nationals, and the very same assets that generate the brain gain migrants use in their home country after working overseas.

In that light, the countries of origin and destination benefit alike and have every reason to continuously nurture and replenish their common asset — the migrant workers' skills. For migrants and their countries to reap the fullest benefits from migrants' remittances, the flow of those funds must be facilitated — rendered cheaper and more affordable, as well as faster and safer. That is another area in which cooperation between the sending and receiving countries is acutely needed and will go a long way towards furthering development.

The return for good of temporary migrants to their home country saves the receiving country the trouble of providing for residents with less than full economic utility, and is thus a gain for the receiving country. The latter should thus encourage that one-way trip by helping the sending country that absorbs all the burden of providing for its elderly and previously productive nationals. That help can best be made by contributing to the sending country's reintegration efforts.

The President returned to the Chair.

Because migration involves relationships between and among individuals and nations, it must rest on principled foundations to ensure its smooth, safe and orderly flow. One of those principles should be the protection of the human rights of individuals. Only with such a foundation, cemented by the principles of fairness and equity, can Governments maximize the productive capacity of individuals and earn for themselves the full development effects of migration.

Moreover, those foundations can be maintained only under the rule of law, for no relationship of any kind can fruitfully subsist without rules of reason acceptable to all. To that end, the Philippines encourages all States to consider ratifying and taking measures to effectively implement existing legal instruments affecting migration, the rights of migrants, and the assistance the family of nations should give them.

Our experience tells us that, among migrants, some are particularly vulnerable to exploitation, abuse and discrimination, and are easy prey to the crimes of trafficking and the smuggling of persons. I refer to women and children, who are already the special concerns of the specialized agencies of the United Nations. The Philippines proposes that further and added attention be given to them as vulnerable migrants needing focused universal support.

I close my statement in the hope that the political momentum generated by this High-level Dialogue will lead to a critical mass of support for the establishment of a forum or appropriate mechanism for the regular discussion and exchange of ideas, and enhanced cooperation among Governments, civil society and all stakeholders on migration and its vast development potentials.

I close this statement, too, on the reiterative note that migration is about human beings who uproot themselves from their familiar surroundings to venture and grope their way into the strange and unfamiliar. That is the human face of migration that we should all consider above everything else as we examine its multidimensional aspects.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Konstantin Romodanovsky, Minister, Director of the Federal Agency for Migration Service of the Russian Federation.

Mr. Romodanovsky (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation attaches great importance to this High-level Dialogue. We feel that the consideration of international migration as a development factor is both topical and timely.

According to the United Nations, Russia today occupies the second place in the world among

countries with the highest number of international migrants. As the Secretary-General's report notes, over the past 15 years Russia has been a hub for various migration flows. The main challenge being met today in Russia is organizing civilized migration. In the context of that challenge, I would stress four main priorities of Russia's migration policy: ensuring optimal conditions for promoting common-law standards; protecting human rights; establishing law and order and the rule of law; and maximizing the positive economic, political, social and demographic effects of migration.

On the one hand, Russia is creating conditions to make itself attractive to migrants; on the other, we are taking decisive action to counter illegal migration. We are not fighting illegal migrants, however, but attempting to mitigate the causes of illegal migration. We are convinced that it is impossible to counter illegal migration exclusively through repressive or restrictive methods.

In that regard, it is appropriate to cite Secretary-General Kofi Annan's assertion that very few countries have managed to reduce the number of migrants by establishing strict controls. We have overcome that misconception and are now devising other, more flexible legislative tools on migration.

In order to attract legal migrant workers, we have significantly simplified the procedures regulating the presence and labour of foreign nationals. The ideology of those laws is in full keeping with Russia's international obligations, including in the area of personal data protection.

We view illegal migration as a threat to our national security. According to expert assessments, there are approximately 10 million illegal migrants on Russian territory today. As a rule, those are citizens of the republics of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and of a number of other countries with limited labour markets. According to our assessment, the economic damage wrought by illegal migration in Russia through the non-payment of taxes alone amounts to more than $8 billion a year. Each year, migrants from the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) export more than $10 billion from Russia by bypassing State control procedures. In 2005, the volume of registered money transfers made by citizens of those countries amounted to more than $3 billion. Each year, the volume of remittances transferred from Russia by migrant workers increases by a factor of one and a half to two.

Those graphic examples make it perfectly clear just how realistic are the initiatives of the International Organization for Migration in proposing, for example, the radical improvement of data collection systems on remittances and their use.

In updating our legislation with a view to regulating the employment of illegal migrants, we look to the examples of European countries that impose heavy fines on employers for each illegal migrant worker hired. Illegal and legal migrant labour pools are communicating vessels; each stimulation of the legal component naturally reduces the size of the illegal component. This year, we anticipate a threefold increase in migrants over previous years.

The Russian Federation is well aware that, in combating illegal migration, we cannot rely exclusively on our own resources. It is only in joining efforts with our foreign partners that we can hope for genuine results. We have signed a number of international agreements that seek to create conditions conducive to the legal presence of migrants and their labour. We place special hope in cooperation with the States members of the Eurasian Economic Community, where active joint efforts are being made to streamline migration procedures for Community citizens.

We are making similar efforts throughout the CIS. To that end, we are in the process of establishing a coordinating council on migration within the CIS Interparliamentary Assembly. We hope that this step will provide additional impetus to improve the living conditions and protect the lives and freedoms of citizens in the post-Soviet space.

We also pin great hope in the return of expatriates to their homeland. A decree of the President of the Russian Federation has approved a State programme facilitating the voluntary return of our compatriots from abroad, the implementation of which will not only be of great importance in humanitarian and human rights terms, but will also promote the development of our country as a whole.

With regard to the creation of a global institution on migrant labour, the issue should be considered from the perspective of achieving practical results on the basis of the principle of States' unquestionable right to establish their own migration priorities.

In conclusion, I should like to state once again that, with respect to migration policy, Russia does not consider itself to be in any way at odds with the international community. We must do everything we can through joint efforts to maximize the beneficial impact of migration on globalization and global integration.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Abdelkader Messahel, Minister Delegate to the Minister of State, Minister for Foreign Affairs in charge of Maghreb and African Affairs of Algeria.

Mr. Messahel (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): Madam President, may I begin by saying how happy we are to see you presiding over this important and novel dialogue on migration. I am confident that our work will be crowned with success under your leadership. May I also commend the Secretary-General for initiating this important and very timely dialogue and for submitting to us a highly relevant report.

Algeria fully appreciates the importance of this debate and has valid reasons for taking a great interest in it. These include, first and foremost, the existence of a large Algerian community abroad, whose fate concerns us greatly. We intend to work with other countries, both in the context of dialogue and bilateral agreements and within regional and international bodies, to preserve their dignity, defend their legitimate rights and protect them from the scourges of xenophobia and racism. An important first step would be to ensure the universal implementation, free of the limitations that exist today, of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.

Secondly, Algeria has today become a country of transit for migrants, most of them illegal. Its geographical position puts it in contact with the rich and prosperous North, which has chosen to exclude human circulation from the liberal policy that it advocates in its relations with its immediate neighbours, and with the South, which, despite major sacrifices, remains subject to underdevelopment and poverty. Not surprisingly, this situation causes many people to migrate from poor areas and to go principally to Europe in search of opportunities for a better life. Such movements create for each of our countries a wide range of social, economic, health and security problems. Because of repressive and exclusionist policies and extreme tightening of conditions for granting visas, there is more illegal migration. The dialogue we are starting today should not neglect this aspect of the question.

Thirdly, Algeria has progressively become a country of destination for migrants. We currently have migrants from 42 different countries, mostly African, and they place a greater burden on the national economy, which, alas, cannot as yet provide sufficient job opportunities for the domestic job seekers. This situation underlines the need to find the most appropriate solutions to the problems raised by South-South migration, and it also highlights the close relationship between migration and development. This is a key aspect of the migration issue and should be a prime focus of attention in this High-level Dialogue.

Fourthly, Algeria is also a victim of the brain drain, a phenomenon that deprives developing countries of their most important resource and increases their dependence on the know-how and knowledge of developed countries. Many developed countries, unfortunately, encourage such haemorrhaging, for which they have various names, including freely chosen migration. Here again the High-level Dialogue has a duty to find a solution that protects the right to development of the countries of the South.

Algeria supports the promotion of close and constructive international cooperation on migration. It believes that combating illegal migration, especially transnational mafia-style networks that have turned a handsome profit from human trafficking, should be stepped up in the context of carefully organized international cooperation. There is, in particular, a need to promote development and reduce the economic gap between developed and developing countries.

This is where the real solution to the major problems raised by current migratory movements lies. Dealing with migration just from the security angle opens the way to trampling on the dignity of millions, or even hundreds of millions, of persons and violating the fundamental rights and right to development of the illegal migratory flows. Focusing attention on strengthened oversight of migratory routes or regionalization of the right to asylum and resorting to conditionalities and other means of exerting pressure on countries of origin and transit as a way of curbing migratory flows are, undeniably, high-risk policies.

We are of the view that the transfer of migrants' savings to countries of origin cannot replace

voluntarist policies to support the development of the poorest countries. We believe that the meagre means of our countries should not continue to be bought out by developed countries. Also, more innovative policies and instruments should be sought, principally with increased support and more determined commitment on the part of the developed countries in order to involve the diasporas more effectively in the socio-economic development of the countries of origin.

These are some of the principles underpinning my country's position on the question of migration. It is a realistic, pragmatic vision that gives pride of place to an integrated global, coherent and balanced approach to this matter, and it informs our initiatives and proposals, both within the 5+5 group of the western Mediterranean basin and in the larger context of the African Union.

With respect to Africa, Algeria saw fit to suggest that this item be inscribed on the agenda of the African Union in order to reach a joint position on this matter. Thanks to the unanimous support given by the African Union to this initiative, a joint position was formulated during the high-level meeting of African experts, which my country had the privilege of hosting in April 2006, and was approved by the African Union during its summit in Banjul. This joint position constitutes a road map for Africa in its collective approach to the phenomenon of migration in Africa itself, and its extension abroad, principally in the European Union. This will certainly provide a useful input to the dialogue that the Secretary-General intends to pursue in the context of a global forum on migration. That forum, we feel, will be a timely and useful instrument in promoting a positive handling of the migration issue.

The President: I next give the floor to Her Excellency The Honourable Dame Billie Miller, Senior Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Barbados.

Dame Billie Miller (Barbados): It is with great pleasure that I address this High-level Dialogue on Migration and Development, which represents an important step in enhanced global cooperation on the issue of international migration and development. It is my sincere hope that this Dialogue will be viewed as the beginning of a sustained consideration of international migration issues at the United Nations.

At the outset, I wish to associate myself with the statement made by the Minister of Home Affairs of South Africa on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

The history of the Caribbean has been intrinsically linked to the movement of people, whether forced, as in the case of Africans brought as slaves to our shores, or voluntary, as in the case of colonists and indentured immigrants. In the English-speaking Caribbean, the twentieth century brought intraregional migration and the movement of our people to North America and Europe.

The new era of international migration has created challenges and opportunities for societies throughout the world and has served to underscore the clear linkage between migration and development, as well as the potential it provides for co-development. It is important that countries cooperate to create a mutually beneficial situation for migrants, their countries of origin and the societies to which they move. Barbados therefore supports the Secretary-General's suggestion on

> "developing a global consultative process within the United Nations that would allow Governments to forge constructive approaches to make the potential contribution of international migration to development a reality". *(A/60/871, para. 296)*

One of the most important benefits gained from Caribbean people living abroad has been the transfer of remittances to low- and middle-income families in the source, or sending, country. Caribbean countries rank among the top 30 countries in the world with the highest remittance flows as a percentage of gross domestic product (GDP). Remittance flows now exceed both foreign direct investment inflows as well as official development assistance for the region as a whole. I must emphasize that these flows of capital are, above all, private funds destined for families and should not be viewed as a replacement for official development aid and development financing, as has been suggested in some quarters. Neither should financial remittances be considered as a substitute for the funding of national development efforts.

While the Barbadian diaspora continues to contribute significantly to the development of Barbados, we still face challenges from the movement out of our region of some of our most educated and highly skilled people. Indeed, this is a problem which affects the entire Caribbean and many other developing

countries as well. The Caribbean region has the highest migration rate into the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries in the world in proportion to its labour force. Our region is a major exporter of highly qualified labour, in particular teachers, nurses and other health-care professionals.

According to a recent International Monetary Fund (IMF) study, almost all of the Caribbean countries fall within range of the top 20 countries in the world with the highest emigration rates of tertiary-level graduates. The majority of Caribbean countries have over time lost more than 50 per cent of the labour force in the tertiary segment and more than 30 per cent in the secondary education segment.

The magnitude of these figures is a major cause for concern, as the exodus of valuable skilled professionals trained in the region has serious implications for development gains. As the Secretary-General notes in paragraph 63 of his report, "small national economies are most vulnerable to 'brain drain', particularly in such crucial sectors as health and education". It is imperative that measures be taken to address this constraint to our development.

There is an important positive symbiotic element to the movement of service providers across borders. There are mutual benefits to be gained by both destination and source countries. On the part of the destination countries, an important contribution is made by migrants to the building of their economies and societies. On the part of the source countries, the eventuality exists of "remittances of expertise", whereby migrants return home with enhanced capacity and abilities which redound positively to national development efforts.

A void currently exists at the global level in addressing the various elements of international migration and development. This High-level Dialogue is a good first step, and Barbados attaches great importance to the need to address such issues within a multilateral context. Our attention to this matter must not now waver. Migration will have an important impact on the ability of our countries to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, and this High-level Dialogue can make a difference if we adopt a holistic approach to the issue. We must demonstrate the political will required to pursue the outcome of our deliberations in an effective and results-oriented manner. We are not at liberty to abstain from this task.

The President: I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Francisco Lainez Rivas, Minister for Foreign Affairs of El Salvador.

Mr. Lainez Rivas (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): Madam President, allow me to convey to you El Salvador's satisfaction at seeing you preside over this High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development. This is certainly a point of pride for all women throughout the world. On behalf of the Government of El Salvador, may I assure you of our readiness to cooperate with you so as to ensure the success of your mandate.

El Salvador welcomes the holding of this High-level Dialogue on migration, which is a very topical and important issue at the international level and which is a key focus of El Salvador's foreign policy. Migration should be approached in a broad-based manner that offers an integral perspective and provides a high level of understanding of the subject of migration. Indeed, migration is an international social issue that gives rise to a dynamic and complex process involving various aspects including flows of individuals, capital, goods and services. It involves rights and obligations, organization, assistance, cooperation, legal and legislative processes, studies and research on the subject of migration, and subsequent oversight by the United Nations system.

In that regard, El Salvador considers that the phenomenon of migration goes hand in hand with the processes of development and international cooperation. It does not view it as an issue that is marginal or unchanging, in the sense of migrants being no more than a labour force in the receiving countries, dispassionately transferring remittances and giving rise to additional financial services.

On the contrary: We seek to focus on the multidimensional nature of this phenomenon, giving the human aspect primary importance so as to protect and promote the rights of individuals who, for whatever reason, have had to leave their countries or origin and become socially and economic integrated in other societies, where they interact in the cultural, business, and even political arenas of the receiving countries.

The Central American region has undertaken joint long-term endeavours aimed at harmonizing the important aspects of internal migration policies in each of our countries. The goal is to arrive at regional consensus agreements, with a view to complementing the efforts of Governments and of civil society to

provide positive solutions to issues ranging from the protection of fundamental human rights — the rights of the child, of women and of vulnerable segments of the population — and in particular to ensuring productive integration and a focus on migration, including in the combat against trafficking in persons and in the rehabilitation of trafficking victims.

This year saw the creation of the Intergovernmental Commission on Trafficking in Persons, aimed at combating this scourge. In addition, an assistance shelter has been established for the victims of that crime. We have joined various international instruments in the context of the United Nations. At the level of national legislation, we have undertaken reforms to strengthen the fight against these crimes.

We see this High-level Dialogue as a very timely forum for establishing communication, exchanging information and experiences and considering measures adopted and progress made in the quest for multilateral cooperation. Therefore, we believe that this forum should be the beginning of an international dialogue that proposes initiatives, debates ideas, follows up on the issues addressed and provides international cooperation to Member States.

One contribution in that regard is the recent report of the Secretary-General on international migration and development (A/60/871), which tells us that workers' greater freedom of movement between countries not only helps to increase global revenues, but also makes the distribution of those revenues more equitable. That confirms our view that this phenomenon promotes development processes that have positive economic and social effects in the countries of destination.

In addition, I should mention the outcomes of the meeting held in Madrid in the context of the Ibero-American Encounter on Migration and Development. At that meeting, we agreed that this issue is vital for our countries. In addition, we shared experiences, best practices and lessons learned in order to be able to take a comprehensive approach leading to the establishment of migration arrangements in keeping with the policies of the countries of origin, transit and destination and focusing actions on ensuring the well-being, security, integrity, development and protection of the human person.

I should now like to speak briefly in my capacity as President Pro Tempore of the Regional Conference on Migration. Since it was established 10 years ago, the Conference has been a forum for dialogue, coordination and cooperation in which countries of destination, transit and origin have reached important agreements and planned activities to assist the migrants of the region. Its Plan of Action reflects work in three main areas: migration policies and management; respect for the human rights of migrants; and the formulation of policies and instruments that strengthen the link between the phenomenon of migration and the promotion of national socio-economic development.

The Regional Conference on Migration is an appropriate mechanism for seeking agreements. The Conference has made it possible to address the complex realities of regional migration in a frank and open manner and in an environment of mutual trust. This phenomenon is seen as occurring in an increasingly global and interdependent international context related to the marked tendency of countries towards integration.

One aspect of this multilateral cooperation framework is the concrete outcomes of the Conference. Projects envisaged include information campaigns on the risks of undocumented migration, trafficking in persons and the illicit smuggling of migrants.

We wish to reaffirm the importance of providing care for persons who have suffered physical disabilities as a result of having migrated. In that connection, at the Regional Conference we presented a project that we hope can be broadened and supported through international cooperation, especially on the part of organizations that are specialized in this area.

I wish to emphasize the actions taken at the Conference to design flexible and simple mechanisms for sharing statistical migration data in a comprehensive format, making it possible to obtain up-to-date information that facilitates reference and provides material for implementing projects and policies in our countries. Such assistance is very useful in this area.

El Salvador hopes that this meeting of countries and organizations becomes an ongoing process of useful dialogue and cooperation that produces concrete outcomes aimed at ensuring that this High-level Dialogue remains an item that cannot be ignored at the United Nations. In that connection, it is also important to stress that the issues of well-being, development and respect for human rights are decisive factors in the international phenomenon of migration.

At the level of theory and international realities, it is imperative to analyse thoroughly the phenomenon of migration and to seek the balance needed to find cooperative solutions as part of this effort — an effort that, I believe, should be given due importance.

Finally, I wish to express to members our willingness to work together and in a coordinated manner to ensure that the outcomes of this High-level Dialogue are translated into effective cooperation and support among countries and organizations in this great task of resolving one of the most complex issues in contemporary international relations.

The meeting rose at 1.20 p.m.